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REPORT OF THE AD HOC INTER-AGENCY MEETING ON SECURITY

(Rome, 6-8 May 1997)

INTRODUCTION

1. The Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD), in consultation with the agencies, programmes and funds concerned, convened the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on Security at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in Rome, from 6 to 8 May 1997.

2. The agenda of the Meeting, documentation and list of participants are contained in annexes I, II and III respectively.

3. The Meeting expressed appreciation to FAO for hosting the Meeting and for the important statement made by the Deputy Director-General of FAO, Mr. H. W. Hjort. The Meeting also thanked Mr. Jakob Simonsen, resident coordinator in Lima, Peru, for participating in the Meeting and sharing his experiences as a hostage during the recent hostage incident at the Japanese embassy residence.

I. RECOMMENDATIONS EMANATING FROM THE MEETING

A. Security information for staff

4. The Meeting considered a document prepared by the United Nations Security Coordinator for distribution to all personnel of the United Nations system. The document provides a description of the inter-agency security structure, security arrangements that are in place at each duty station, a summary of each staff member's individual responsibility regarding security, and detailed personal security guidelines, including information on how to survive as a hostage and what to do in the event of an airline hijacking.

5. The Meeting approved the document and requested that all organizations ensure that it was given widespread distribution as soon as possible.

B. Security for locally recruited staff

6. The Meeting considered the issue of security for locally recruited staff and recommended the following:

(a) UNSECOORD should ensure that all measures applicable to local staff are consistently implemented at all duty stations and should require designated officials to confirm this implementation. The headquarters of all agencies, programmes and funds should take urgent action to ensure that their representatives in the field, as members of the security management team (SMT), assist the designated official in the implementation of all measures outlined in the field security handbook for locally recruited staff, namely, updating of lists of staff and wardens, and inclusion in the security plan. UNSECOORD should also ensure that, to the extent possible, designated officials consider the logistics requirements of locally recruited staff. Should there be any difficulties in the implementation of these measures, UNSECOORD should be informed so that action can be taken with the headquarters of the parent organization of the designated official;

(b) Locally recruited staff should be briefed by their agency representative or the field security officer at the time of their employment and on a regular basis about what the United Nations security system can and cannot do for them in the event of an emergency. This will prevent expectations from being raised unjustifiably;[1]

(c) The issue of self-evacuation by locally recruited staff should be referred to the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Personnel and General Administrative Questions (CCAQ(PER)) with a request to that body to ensure that a common policy is applicable when locally recruited staff self-evacuate. Inter alia, CCAQ is requested to consider the following:

(i) All organizations should agree that similar treatment will be provided to all locally recruited staff;

(ii) A determination should be made regarding what entitlements might be payable to locally recruited staff who self-evacuate. A clear description of what the staff member can expect if he/she self-evacuates should be spelt out to all staff at the time of recruitment;

(iii) Since most duty stations employ local personnel on contracts such as special services agreements (SSAs) and other, similar arrangements that do not confer staff-member status, standardized procedures concerning such types of employees should be developed. A memorandum or a specific part of the contract explaining the responsibility that the organizations will accept in the event of a crisis will help eliminate extremely high expectations.

C. Cooperation with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations

7. Following discussions with representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and recalling security directive SD/1996/2 and the proposed addendum to it regarding the procedures to be followed to formalize the inclusion of any implementing partners in the United Nations security management system, the Meeting recommended that cooperation with intergovernmental organizations/non-governmental organizations at the field

level be enhanced in order to create a better collaborative effort regarding security.

8. The Meeting welcomed the improved and more frequent dialogue among the organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations as well as the increasing interaction between the various organizations regarding the safety and security of staff.

9. The Meeting also welcomed the increased involvement on the part of member States in regard to addressing the issue of security of staff. The Meeting welcomed, in particular, the recent ambassadorial-level meeting of the Humanitarian Liaison Working Group which had met in Geneva on 8 April 1997 to discuss security of staff.

D. Coordination with peacekeeping and other field missions

10. Based on the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on Security held in May 1996, UNSECOORD undertook informal consultations with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, both of the United Nations Secretariat, regarding the issue of coordination between United Nations agencies, programmes and funds and peacekeeping missions. Before proceeding with the formal review of this matter, UNSECOORD requested the views of the agencies, programmes and funds to ensure that there was broad agreement with UNSECOORD's proposal to develop guidelines or protocols to improve this coordination. The plan proposed by UNSECOORD was found to be generally acceptable and the Meeting recommended that the formal review be undertaken immediately.

E. Training

11. The Meeting stressed that the necessary resources for security training should be found so as to ensure that staff members required to serve in the field were adequately prepared. UNSECOORD was requested to prepare an inventory of the different types of security training being carried out in the system. The Meeting also recommended that UNSECOORD prepare a security training standard so that all organizations could ensure that appropriate training would be given to staff members before they went into the field. Training should also be repeated periodically at high-risk duty stations. The training of security management teams should be a top priority.

F. Stress management

12. Bearing in mind the urgent need for the organizations of the United Nations system to provide stress counselling to staff members required to serve in high-risk areas, the Meeting recommended that two stress counsellors be recruited on an inter-agency basis, as was the case for field security officers, using the formula decided upon by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) for distributing costs associated with staff in UNSECOORD. The two counsellors would be under the authority of the United Nations Security

Coordinator. An English-speaking counsellor would be based in Nairobi (under the administrative responsibility of the resident coordinator) and a French-speaking counsellor would be based in Abidjan (under the responsibility of the resident coordinator). The estimated cost for each of these individuals would be $212,000. A breakdown of these costs is contained in annex IV.

G. Hostage crisis management

13. The Meeting recalled that, since 1 January 1994, there had been 35 hostage incidents in 14 different countries involving a total of 128 staff members. The Meeting made several recommendations which are presented below:

(a) Executive heads should redefine the security thresholds that they are prepared to accept in order to continue operations; they must also define how far staff are expected to go in regard to placing themselves in danger in order to carry out their mandates and responsibilities;

(b) All United Nations personnel should be made aware of the possibility of their being taken hostage and, as appropriate, trained regarding how to avoid being taken hostage and how to survive as a hostage; staff members involved with security management must be trained regarding how to manage a hostage situation;

(c) Arrangements must be put in place immediately to ensure that post-traumatic stress counselling is offered to all staff members who have gone through a hostage incident, and their families;

(d) Organizations should put in place arrangements to assist families of hostages in learning how to cope with the situation; organizations should also provide assistance in dealing with the media;

(e) UNSECOORD, with the help of experts from a member State, will organize a one-week session to train a cadre of hostage negotiators within the United Nations system. The costs of this training will be borne by the organization whose staff are selected to participate in this training.

H. Transportation of cash

14. The Meeting considered the issue of transportation of cash and expressed grave concern about the fact that staff members were regularly being used for the transportation of large sums. The Meeting strongly reiterates to ACC that the personal security of staff members, both international and national, is of paramount importance and that organizations must find alternative ways and means so as to ensure that staff members are not used in this kind of operation, either deliberately or by association.

I. Residential security measures

15. The Meeting considered a proposal by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that women staff members living alone in the field should be

provided with one additional security measure over and above any of the three residential security measures (window bars, security alarm systems and security guards) that had already been approved at the given duty station. Following discussions and taking note of UNDP's commendable concern for women living alone, the Meeting agreed that CCAQ(PER) should be requested to consider providing the designated official with the authority to review flexibly and transparently any requests from staff members for an additional residential security measure over and above what had already been approved for the duty stations, bearing in mind their particular vulnerability.

16. The Meeting also reviewed the levels of reimbursement for residential security measures in general and noted from UNSECOORD's survey of actual costs at all duty stations where these measures had been approved that, at 11 such duty stations (Botswana, Fiji, the Gambia, Ghana, Jamaica, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania), costs were above the current level of reimbursement. The Meeting recommended that CCAQ(PER) consider what special arrangements might be in order for these duty stations so as to relieve the financial burden on staff.

J. Security management in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire)

17. The Meeting reviewed the security situation prevailing in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire) since late 1996. In discussions regarding the use of national forces to ensure the security and safety of staff in eastern Zaire, it was generally felt by the participants that the Zaire Contingent for Camp Security (ZCSC) had made it possible for staff of United Nations and other humanitarian organizations to continue working effectively in a relatively secure environment. It was also noted that ZCSC had made it possible for internationally recruited staff members to evacuate safely when the security situation deteriorated.

18. The Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System (CCISUA) and the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA) expressed the view, however, that this was a very expensive operation whose benefits had not been proved. They emphasized that it should not be presented as a "model of security management".

19. The Meeting also discussed the need for information management within the United Nations system with regard to specific security situations and having the goal of protecting staff who might be placed at greater risk by untimely public statements.

K. Financial implications of field security measures

20. In order to facilitate financial planning by agencies, programmes and funds with respect to security measures such as the recruitment of field security officers, UNSECOORD was requested to ensure that all requests received from the field were harmonized with respect to both the items to be financed on an inter-agency basis and the formula to be used in apportioning agency costs.

This formula should include local staff. To further increase transparency, criteria should be established for use in determining where field security officers were required. In addition, consideration should be given to the possibility of using field security officers on a regional basis in some locations to provide greater cost-effectiveness and better security. The Meeting also recommended that there be greater unification of the field security officer system rather than encouragement of the present practice whereby some organizations had their own security officers outside the common system.

21. The Meeting recommended that ACC consider including a separate budget line in future humanitarian appeals to cover the costs of security measures.

L. Reporting requirements and follow-up regarding the case of detained staff

22. At the request of FICSA, the Meeting considered the situation of detained staff. The Meeting recommended that ACC express grave concern about the increased number of United Nations personnel who were being killed as well as kidnapped, taken hostage or detained without due process of law. The Meeting welcomed the determined efforts by staff representatives to keep the issue alive and to pursue it with energy.

II. OTHER MATTERS

23. The Meeting welcomed an invitation from the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to hold the next Meeting at ICAO headquarters in Montreal in May 1998.

Notes

[1] The representative of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA) reiterated his organization's position that locally recruited staff members should be eligible for evacuation and, in this respect, proposed that the decision to evacuate locally recruited staff members should be delegated to the designated official.

Annex I

AGENDA

1. Security information for staff.

2. Security for local staff.

3. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations/non-governmental organizations.

4. Coordination with peacekeeping and other field missions.

5. Security training.

6. Stress management.

7. Realities of operating in 1997:

   (a) Hostage crisis management;

   (b) Transportation of cash.

8. Residential security measures.

9. Security management in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire).

10. Financial implications of field security measures.

11. Reporting requirements and follow-up regarding cases of arrested and detained staff.

Annex II

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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Chairman: Mr. Benon V. SEVAN

Secretary: Ms. Diana RUSSLER

United Nations entities and programmes

United Nations	Mr. Benon Sevan Ms. Diana Russler Mr. Vladimir Golitsyn
United Nations Children's Fund	Mr. Marc Powe
United Nations Development Programme	Mr. Edmund Cain Mr. Julio Grieco Mr. Jakob Simonsen
United Nations Office for Project Services	Mr. Peter Van Laere
United Nations Volunteers	Mr. Wolfgang Fischer
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Ms. Hope Hanlan Mr. Anthony O'Connell
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	Ms. Nasra Hassan Mr. Declan Greenway
United Nations Environment Programme	Mr. Patrick Fox
World Food Programme	Mr. Andrew Toh Ms. Judith Thimke

Specialized agencies and International Atomic Energy Agency

International Atomic Energy Agency	Mr. Alberto Salas-Barahona
International Labour Organization	Mr. Jacques Boisard
International Civil Aviation Organization	Mr. William Withee
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Mr. M. J. Omar Mr. Philippe Mengin Mr. Robert Patterson
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Mr. H. de Toustain

World Health Organization	Ms. A. E. Miller
International Monetary Fund	Ms. Inger Prebensen Mr. David Cook
International Telecommunication Union	Ms. M-F. Fosanelli
World Bank	Mr. Neil Creeden

Observers

Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA)	Mr. A. Da Silva Durao Mr. Guy Sneyers Ms. Raymonde Martineau
Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System (CCISUA)	Mr. N. Ishak Mr. Paepae Wiki
InterAction	Mr. Charles Rogers
International Committee of the Red Cross	Mr. Philippe Dind
International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)	Mr. Andre Van Chau Mr. Pierre Laurent Mr. George Radcliffe
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies	Mr. Tor Planting
International Organization for Migration (IOM)	Mr. Martin Wyss
Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response	Ms. Amanda Harding

Annex IV

COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE RECRUITMENT OF STRESS COUNSELLORS ON AN INTER-AGENCY BASIS

The following are the costs per person per year:

Recurrent costs

(a)	Pro forma staff costs (including salary and common staff costs)	$150 000
(b)	Secretary	15 000
(c)	Rental of office space/equipment/communications	7 000
(d)	Routine travel (four trips per year)*	20 000
		192 000

One-time costs

(a)	Vehicle	20 000
	Total first year	$212 000

* With regard to travel costs, four routine trips per year per person have been budgeted; however, with regard to critical incident debriefing and any other travel, each duty station requesting the presence of the stress counsellor would be required to pay travel and daily subsistence allowance (DSA) costs.